1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

234 513 554 784 avoid touching anything in the hut except the sleeping-place and the floor on pain of losing his office. He is allowed intercourse with any Tarthar woman, but must have nothing to do with the women of his own division, the Teivaliol.

[558] While in office, the *kudrpalikartmokh* is not allowed to visit the bazaar,[1] and if he does so he becomes an ordinary person at once. One afternoon when I was working with Parkurs (8), one of the elders of the Kars clan, Sakari (7), who had been *kudrpalikartmokh* at Kuzhu, came to announce that he had visited the bazaar at Ootacamund. He was therefore no longer *palikartmokh*, and he came to tell Parkurs that a successor must be appointed. It seemed to me in this case that Sakari had visited the bazaar because he was tired of office and wished to become free. I had a suspicion also that he wished to become acquainted with my proceedings, for he came straight to me from the bazaar and was one of my most regular attendants for some time after his deprivation. The *kudrpalikartmokh* is prohibited from entering a *tarvali*, though the *tarvalikartmokh* may enter a *kudrpali*.

234 272 554 761 784 The milk of buffaloes connected with a *kudrpali* is more sacred than that of buffaloes milked at a *tarvali*. Any one may drink milk from a *tarvali*, but the milk of the *kudrpali* may only be drunk by the *palikartmokh*. If any one else drink the milk of the *kudrpali* it is believed that he will die. I could learn of no case in which a man had taken this milk, but Kòdrner (7) had seen a cat die on the day it had drunk milk of the *martir*, the buffaloes of the *kudrpali* of Kars. Kòdrner was somewhat of a sceptic in connexion with many of the beliefs of his people, but he was very much in earnest on this occasion, and when my interpreter said he should like to drink some of the milk, Kòdrner offered to give him one hundred rupees if he drank the milk of *martir* for four days and remained alive.

173 234 618 The buffaloes tended at the *tarvali* and *kudrpali* are of several named kinds. According to tradition, each clan at the original distribution of buffaloes by Teikirzi (see p. 186) was given a certain kind. To Kars were given the buffaloes

[1] I am not sure whether this restriction does not also apply to the *tarvali-kartmokh*.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

Owing to the general reluctance to talk about this ceremony, I was not able to obtain such independent accounts from other people as I should have liked, but the details of the sacrifice as given me by Teitnir agreed with those of the ceremony I witnessed, and I have no doubt as to its essential accuracy. I had hoped to have obtained independent evidence on some doubtful features at the end of my visit, but these hopes were entirely frustrated by the death of Teitnir's wife a few days after the ceremony which had been performed for my benefit, her death being generally ascribed to the anger of the gods because the secrets of *erkumptthpini* had been revealed. After I had left the hills, however, Samuel succeeded in obtaining information on several doubtful points, and was given an independent account which entirely confirmed the accuracy of the proceedings which he had witnessed at the same time as myself.

The ceremony is performed both at the ordinary village and at the *ti* dairy. At the *ti* there is no doubt that it is performed three times a year, but there was much discrepancy in the accounts of its frequency at the village. According to some, the sacrifice only takes place once a year at each village in October, soon after the ceremony of *teutiitusthchi*, to be described later in this chapter. According to others, the ceremony is performed whenever the people have a suitable male calf to sacrifice. During the ten years that my interpreter, Samuel, had been living among the Todas, he had come to the conclusion that the ceremony is performed fairly often, his opinion being based on chance remarks made by the children. I think there is very little doubt that a calf is now killed in each village more often than once a year, and the ceremony at which I was present was almost certainly one of the occasional performances, though the time of year at which it took place makes it possible that it was the chief annual occasion of that village.

There was also some doubt whether there is an annual ceremony in every village for the people living in that village, or whether the annual ceremony is only performed in the *etudmod*, or chief village of each clan, for all the people of the clan. The true state of affairs at the present time is probably

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

Mackenzie, with whom I was staying, had shot a sambhar, and Kutadri joined others in making a hearty meal on the flesh of the animal. The next day he felt far from well, and searching in his mind for the cause of his sufferings, his suspicions did not fall on the sambhar, but wavered between sorcery of the Kurumbas and the anger of the gods of the locality, because he had shown me certain sacred features of the land. He was unable to continue to act as my guide, rendering my visit to the Kundahs largely fruitless, and on his return home he frightened himself into serious illness.

Teitnir, who had told me many things, but, above all, had dared to show me the *erkumptthpimi* sacrifice, lost his wife a few days after this ceremony. She had given birth to a dead child, and in spite of obviously serious fever, she had gone through a trying ceremony connected with removal to the seclusion-hut, and had walked a long way to this hut. Two days later she died.

Kaners, who had been my chief informant on the procedure of the *ti* dairy, awoke one morning to find the dairy of his village burnt. No human agency seemed possible, and no doubt was entertained that it was another manifestation of the displeasure of the gods.

Numerous councils were held, and the diviners were consulted, on this occasion Midjkudr and Tadrners. They found that Kutadri's misfortunes were due to his having revealed to me secrets about Pan, although, as a matter of fact, his illness had prevented his telling me anything of importance. It was decided that he was to give a buffalo to the Pan *ti*.

The death of Teitnir's wife was found to have two causes.[1] The first was that Teitnir had shown me the *erkumptthpimi* ceremony; the second was that he had gone with his wife to Lake View, the house of the Zenana mission, and had stayed there for several months, Teitnir having done this in order to avoid losing his wife according to the *terurstki* custom (see Chap. XXII). For the first offence Teitnir was to do *irnörtiti* to his clan, the Kuudrol, and for the second offence he was to give a buffalo to the Amatol,

[1] According to a later finding of the *teuol*, the death of Terrveli was due to sorcery (see p. 261).

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

753 his *pia*, or grandfather, being especially singled out among
761 them. The latter penalty was paid before I left the hills.
688 Teitnir devoted a sacred buffalo (*pasthir*) to his grandfather,
782 and as a sign that he had done so, he did *kalmelpudithti* to
783 Ivievan (52), one of the chief men of his family. The giving of the buffalo was followed by a feast.

123 The *teuol* were also consulted on account of the burning of
782 the dairy belonging to the village of Kaners. They decided
783 that the loss of the dairy was due to spontaneous combustion,
777 "had burnt of itself," because Kaners had revealed to me the
688 secrets of the *ti*, and, as he had told me chiefly the procedure of the Nòdrs *ti*, he was sentenced to do *irnörtiti* to this institution.

Kòdrner, who had been my general assistant, was directed to perform *pilinörtiti* to Kiudr, and the *teuol* also said that all the Todas were to do *irnörtiti* to the *ti* dairies because the elders had not intervened and put an end to the revelations which the people had been making to me.

123 Unfortunately these decisions of the *teuol* were only given
796 out very shortly before I left the hills. Indeed, the divination
783 appeared to be still going on when I left, probably in order to
688 obtain further light on the troubles. I had therefore no
782 opportunity of witnessing the various ceremonies which were to result from my visit. I hoped that Samuel might have been able to see some of them, but the only proceedings of which he was able to give me any account took place on January 5th, nearly a month after my departure, when all the Todas assembled at the *ti mad* of Mòdr, where the buffaloes of the Nòdrs *ti* were standing, and prayed to the *ti* to pardon them for the sins they had committed in revealing its secrets. After praying, they took food in the *pül* of the dairy, and did not return home till the evening. I was not told of the existence of any such ceremony of atonement by prayer only, and I strongly suspect it was an innovation adopted in order to avoid the expense of the general *irnörtiti* to the *ti* which the diviners had prescribed.

783 Several of the offerings which were thus ordered by the
688 *teuol* seem clearly to have been of the nature of punishment.
796 Kòdrner was to do *pilinörtiti* because he had helped me, and
782

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

villages where there is plenty of grass for the buffaloes, and are in general visited for short periods. The only explanation which could be given was that owing to the short time they are occupied it is not worth while to transfer the whole family to the place. It seemed, however, certain that women were definitely forbidden to live at these villages—a village where a woman may live being distinguished as *ishnidvaimad*—and this suggests that the institution is based on something more than mere convenience, and that the villages have some kind of sanctity which makes it undesirable that women should live in them. 562 621 778 784 788

The following are the only existing villages of this kind:—Taradrkirsi, the male funeral village of Kars; Kudrmas and Telgudr, belonging to Taradr; Perg, belonging to the Panol; and Pirsush, belonging to Kuudr.

Three of these, Taradrkirsi, Kudrmas, and Pirsush, receive the *kaimukhti* salutation, and are certainly ancient and sacred villages, while there was some doubt as to whether Telgudr should not also be saluted. The only *kaiolmad* I visited was Taradrkirsi, where there is now only a dairy, so that there is a clear reason why women cannot live there, but this did not appear to be the reason at other places.

Again, I could not ascertain why they should be called "old man villages," and their existence must, I am afraid, remain a mystery, though I think we may be confident that there is, or has been in the past, some ceremonial reason to explain their existence.

Two Todas villages are known as *satimad*. If a dispute arises between two men they are taken to the front of the dairy of the *satimad*, and are made to state what has happened, and anything a man says under these conditions will be believed. It is thought that if a man does not speak the truth, he will fall sick and his buffaloes will die. 621 627 761 778

According to some accounts there is only one true *satimad*, the village of Kiudr, which we have already seen has several signs of especial sanctity, such as the mention of its house in the prayer, the severe restrictions on its women during pregnancy, and the homage rendered to it by Todas of every clan.

Z: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

CHAP. XVIII. [761] 775

often beneficent than the contrary. Hence their beliefs are pleasant rather than otherwise, and death is free from horrors.

Even when a man's breath has left his body, and the corpse yet remains with them—forming the most eventful episode in their experience—yet no power of generalising or abstract reasoning seems to come to their aid, to assist them in this their day of agony, to frame any sort of *link between* the expired spirit, and the Spirit which rules the darkness, in whose bosom it has been lost to sight. Their practical experience forms the fuel, which their strong sense of *perpetuity*, fanned by the visible evidences of power in all nature, kindles into flame; dictating that the curious something which has just left that body—lying so senseless without it—must have gone somewhere. And where could it have gone, but to another place just like this? Other *Todas are there*: and they could not live without milk; *therefore* buffalos are there too!

000 'A high degree of education must be attained,' writes Mr. Baring-Gould, 'before the notion of annihilation can be apprehended.' Again: 'Let anyone try to imagine himself extinguished—his powers of thought, his feelings, his volitions, his perceptions broken short off—and he will see how extremely difficult is the task, and how incomplete his success.'[1]

I incline greatly to the belief that the firm faith in a future state, owes its *origin* more to the domestic feelings, strengthened by the strong conservative sense provided by the organ of Concentrativeness, than to Hope, which is ordinarily considered to be its stronghold. The first combination is that which eminently distinguishes the most primitive races, whilst Hope is a religious organ whose development betokens an advance from the primæval state. A very pretty illustration of my theory is contained in the following quotation from 'Guy Mannering,' taken from Mr. Baring-Gould's work: 'Whiles I think my puir bairn's dead,'

[1] Baring-Gould. 'The Origin of Religious Belief.'

2: Marshall C.5 (1870) 1873 Toda

said Madge Wildfire, 'ye ken[1] very weel it's buried—but that signifies naething. I have had it on my knee a hundred times and a hundred times till that, since it was buried; and how could that be were it dead, ye ken? it's merely impossible.'

It is somewhat remarkable that the Todas should not only feel so confident in their immortality, but be without apprehension as to the future state; in the possibility that individually they may not attain to it. No such doubts arise to perplex their simple minds. Death is not a leap in the dark, but the contrary. The mode of thought—if thinking, it may be termed—by which they seem to set at rest this difficulty of more advanced and religious races, is too curious to be lost.

Their belief appears to be based on two considerations; one, what they know: the other, a sort of self-consciousness.

As regards the first, they *know* that they and their cattle were raised from the earth by the Great Unseen. This with them is a faith assured, as if the true story had been handed down from incontrovertible sources. They find themselves living, existing, breathing: they note the breath-life to leave the clay which returns to earth. But where does this breath-life go? The reply is contained in their *knowledge*. 'Tis a little sophistical perhaps, but an illogical jump is nothing with such people. They know that Todas and cattle live in amnôr; hence they are certain, with an absolute certainty, that this departed breath has gone there to join their forefathers. In this there is nothing more wonderful than that they rose from the soil! The subject is not worth thinking about! it has long been known! Thinking is difficult to the primitive mind. Best not to think!

If with all our accumulated stores of information, we find the subject of a future state but little further advanced than it was ages ago, we can sympathise with a very simple people who have so few facts to work upon, and with whom the

[1] I would invite a comparison between this word ken, and the Toda words for I see, I dream, I smell, *et cetera*, in Chapter XXIX.

3: Breeks G-5 (no date) 1873 Toda

they walk to another stone near the *Kódmane* in procession, shouting "Hoh Hoh," the Pelki with the bow in the middle, and the *Varshdl* in front, carrying the leaf vessel, out of which he takes two pieces of bark at intervals, throwing one behind him and another before him. The calf is dragged to this stone and let loose, when they all run after it, throwing themselves down at intervals so as to touch the ground with their foreheads, and shouting

Amuddipa Sévuné
Kavuse dharma tilundi.

which may be rendered, "May he enter heaven, may *it be well with his good deeds* "and his sins."

The Pelkis and Pekkans do not sacrifice a buffalo, nor loose a calf at the dry funeral, but at the next new moon they slaughter a male buffalo, and bringing the blood in a leaf vessel to the *kódmane*, sprinkle it on the kraal and the *Ārārum*.

The ceremonies are hardly concluded, before the Kotas descend upon the carcases of the buffaloes like so many vultures, and hack them to pieces, screaming and squabbling over the spoil, and carrying off the flesh in great lumps to their homes. It is curious that the Todas, to whose relatives the dead animals are consecrated, make no objection to this disgusting operation, though carried on at the very door of the *Kódmane*. I asked a Toda once about it, and he replied, "*When the buffaloes are* "*alive they are ours; when dead they belong to the Kotas.*"

The *Kód* is burnt about four o'clock on the following morning (they say the burning must be completed before dawn) at the *Ārārum*,* a single circle of large stones fixed in the ground not far from the Kódmane. They first light a fire outside the *Ārārum*, and then spread the *pódkuli* with the *kód* in the middle of the circle, and pile burning sticks on it until, with the help of ghee, they make a great blaze. They put on the inside fire the following articles:—

A *Kóf Kotti*, a sort of large knife or sickle wrapped round with cloth.
An axe.
Twenty-one bamboo measures ornamented with cowries, two anna bits, and coloured threads, and containing barley, kire, and sáme grain.
Four or five cakes of jaggery.
A winnowing basket.
A basket for holding rice.
Three or four Toda walking sticks.
A straight pole (*Tarsh*) 20 feet long, ornamented with tassels and rosettes of cowries, and sometimes with a small silver umbrella. (*Plate* XI., *fig.* 3.)
A palm-leaf umbrella.
A miniature bow and three arrows.† (*Plate* XI., *fig.* a.)
A pan.

* I could not ascertain with any certainty whether these stone circles, which are always to be found near the funeral mound, had been constructed in recent years or were of considerable antiquity. Their appearance, however, did not suggest any great age. From the Todas whom I questioned on the subject, it was very difficult to elicit any definite information; but the impression which their answers conveyed, was, that now and then they constructed new circles, when they considered that the old ones have been used long enough.

† I am told that these are burned at the green funeral when the Kotas have time to make them, but they must not be made beforehand, or the man for whom they were intended would die; and as the Kotas will only work, and the Todas only burn on certain days, it must frequently happen that the two do not coincide.

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

578 674 worse was, to begin with, ever brought to my notice by my informants.

When, however, I delved more deeply into the matter, I soon found out that appearances were very deceptive, and that under a peaceful exterior, many serious acts of aggression had taken and were still taking [754] place. Personal feuds of intense hatred and jealousy, especially among the older men, seemed to be the reasons for what were not just empty accusations of witchcraft, but unmistakably crimes, and I gathered so much evidence of this that I have come to think that there are very [682] few influential old Todas who die a natural death. They are more [648] usually done away with by their rivals, through the time-honoured method of having them poisoned by the Kurumbas, mainly, I think, with *datura*.

578 682 [754] [115] [662] Thus Karnoz of Melgarsh (45), whom I got to know very well, was greatly feared as a *pili* (sorcerer). When I returned to the Nilgiris for the second time in 1949, I found that he had reputedly done away with Ujar (48), my old and trusted informant, his uncle and chief of the Melgarsh *modol*, simply because he wished to take his place at the head of the clan. He had had him poisoned by his "own" Kurumbas, as it was put to me, after having first got the deceased's wife and two children out of the way in the same manner. The remaining members of the murdered man's family had fled in terror to Kakhwurkh *mad* and their house stood empty and forlorn at Melgarsh when I came back there in 1949. Karnoz was fined Rs. 12 by the *noim* for this [683] crime and warned that, if he persisted in practising sorcery, his house [623] would be set on fire, and he himself killed.

While working with the widow of Kuriolv (52), whom Rivers describes in such eloquent terms (see *The Todas*, pp. 551–2), my wife discovered that, after having rid himself of rivals and wives alike by the habitual [648] Toda method of indirect poisoning through the agency of the Kurumbas, he was himself murdered in the same way by his wife. He ended his life practically at the same time as his rival and victim Arjgur (56) who, in a neighbouring house at Kuur, died from the effects of the poison which he, Kuriolv, had himself administered to him.

During my second stay in the Nilgiris in 1949, Piliar (52) poisoned Tödhem of Aperngor because he had had a son by a woman whom Piliar had given up, believing her to be barren. The deed was com- [761] mitted by a Kurumba in Piliar's pay who gave the poison with some [123] milk to Tödhem at a funeral which I attended. I later tried to get the [757] ailing man to hospital in Ootacamund in order to look better into his case as well as to try to save him, but to no avail. I came up against

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

the stubborn resistance of Piliar, who stood guard at the door of Tödhen's house at Apersgor, and who assured me that "Toda and Western medicine do not mix". Curiously enough, the victim agreed with his tormentor, and refused to follow me. In such cases the man usually resigns himself to a death which he feels the gods desire, but Tödhen somehow, in this case, recovered and did not die.

3. TODA POLYANDRY

The custom of polyandry is a very old one with the tribe. When questioned, the Todas will tell you that they have always practised it, and that its origins are unknown – it seems so natural a form of marriage to them. Their mythology mentioned polyandrous gods, therefore, obviously, they say, this type of matrimony has always existed.

Terkish, it seems, married an ordinary Toda called Püth who, after his death was deified. With him, the mother-goddess of the Nilgiris had thirteen children, eleven boys and two girls. None of these children married, except two of the sons, Podzövördjen and Pödjövorj, these polyandrously to an ordinary Toda woman called Notirsh. She too, after her death, became a goddess, now well-known to all Todas. From this polyandrous marriage of the gods, Kwotèn, the man-god who ran after Terkosh and was eventually carried off by her (see p. 265), was born. He married Mütürpani, a Toda woman and not a goddess, and had two sons by her, Koltawutn and Kshörwutn, of whom there are still descendants alive today (at a *mad* called *Kiaper* according to my 1939 notes, which I unfortunately have not been able to identify since; the late Ujar (48) having been my principal informant for the above).

Toda polyandry is mostly fraternal, as is usually the case elsewhere as well. But there are some cases of non-fraternal polyandry, although I, personally, found that, in those cases, the husbands were clan-brothers, that is, of the same clan and of the same generation which, in accordance with the classificatory type of Toda kinship, makes them look upon each other as brothers. Thus Wunkwur and Manarn of Norsh were married jointly to Puvamut of Tarar and lived together at the Norsh *mad*, where I often had occasion to visit them. She had been married to the first of her husbands (sons of two brothers) because he was her *matchuni*; then Wunkwur took her to wife from his cousin by paying Manarn a certain amount of buffaloes, but after some time, the latter returned and by giving half of the buffaloes back was accepted again as Puvamat's husband. *Purstitpini* was, however, performed for